
SRRT Newsletter

January 2007
Issue 156-157

Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association

SRRT Events at ALA Midwinter 2007

Environmental Task Force

Saturday, January 20th, 8:00-10:00 am,
Renaissance Hotel, Visions Room

Feminist Task Force

Saturday, January 20th, 8:00-10:00 am,
Renaissance Hotel, Visions Room

All Task Force Meeting

Saturday, January 20th, 8:00-10:00 am,
Renaissance Hotel, Visions Room

Alternatives in Publication Task Force

Saturday, January 20th, 8:00-10:00 am,
Renaissance Hotel, Visions Room

Hunger, Homelessness @ Poverty Task Force

Saturday, January 20th, 8:00-10:00 am,
Renaissance Hotel, Visions Room

Information Policy in the Public Interest Task Force

Saturday, January 20th, 8:00-10:00 am,
Renaissance Hotel, Visions Room

International Responsibilities Task Force

Saturday, January 20th, 8:00-10:00 am,
Renaissance Hotel Visions Room

Action Council I

Saturday, January 20th, 10:30 am-2.30 pm,
Renaissance Hotel, Madison Room

FTF Amelia Bloomer Project

Saturday, January 20th, 1:30-3:30 pm,
Pan Pacific Seattle, Lakefront Room

FTF Amelia Bloomer Project

Saturday, January 20th, 4:00-6:00 pm,
W Seattle, Studio 3

FTF Amelia Bloomer Project

Sunday, January 21st, 1:30-3:30 pm,
Washington State Convention and Trade Center,
Room 305

FTF Amelia Bloomer Project

Sunday, January 21st, 1:30-3:30 pm,
Washington State Convention and Trade Center,
Room 617

Progressive Librarians Guild Meeting

Sunday, January 21st, 4:00-6:00 pm,
Crowne Plaza Seattle, Carlsbad Room

FTF Amelia Bloomer Project

Sunday, January 21st, 4:00-6:00 pm,
Washington State Convention and Trade Center,
Room 614

FTF Meeting Followed by Dinner

Sunday, January 21st, 6:00-7:30 pm,
Grand Hyatt Seattle, Douglas Boardroom

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Holiday Sunrise Celebration

Monday, January 22nd, 6:00-7:00 am,
Washington State Convention and Trade Center,
Room 602-604

FTF Amelia Bloomer Project

Monday, January 22nd, 8:00-10:00 am,
Washington State Convention and Trade Center,
Room 617

SRRT Action Council II

Monday, January 22nd, 1:30-3:30 pm,
Washington State Convention and Trade Center

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Letter from Elaine Harger SRRT Coordinator

Dear SRRT Members,

Greetings from Dallas where I've been attending the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color. What a wonderful, energizing and educational gathering of librarians of all colors, backgrounds, specializations and interests. Many SRRT members are here, and Kathleen de la Peña McCook, Isabel Espinal and I spoke to a standing-room-only audience on the topic of "Librarians and Social Movements." Our presentations focused on the imperative need for 21st century librarians to engage in the social movements of today, and will be published in the conference proceedings.

I provided background information on the origins of SRRT in the social movements of the 1960s and '70s and of the Progressive Librarians Guild in the 1980s, and described how the professional is political whether or not librarians want to acknowledge that fact. Kathleen spoke of our duty to defend the teaching of reading in the wake of recent revelations that political agendas played a greater role in doling out of grand funding in the Reading First program than sound educational methodologies, and of the vital importance of union activism. Isabel spoke pointedly of her trepidations as a Latina toward becoming active in groups like SRRT and PLG. She spoke of feeling that these groups were "too white" and not welcoming of her as a woman of color. She went on, however, to tell about how she joined both after realizing that SRRT and PLG were taking on important political questions often ignored by ALA and its caucuses. She concluded by encouraging others to add their voices and experience to the table of the progressive library community. Many audience members voiced their support and thanked us for bringing our message of "the professional is political" to the JCLC.

We were, of course, not the only presenters which activist messages. Pedro Reynoso, a PhD candidate at the University of Texas – Austin, presented his ethnological research at a program entitled "Merging Public Librarianship and Community Activism." The intent of his research is to document and describe the skills used by librarians who use their positions to advocate for their community's interests. Clifton Griffin, the subject of Reynoso's research, was present at the program, and he described being hired in 1970 to "oversee the demise" of East Austin's "colored branch" only to turn it into a vital part of the community.

Finally, a brief report on an invitation I received in the spring to speak with a group of writers, editors and graphic artists in the agricultural field who were organizing a social responsibilities group within their own professional organization – ACE (Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Life and Human Services). They were interested to hear about how the concept and practice of social responsibilities play out within the context of another professional association and contacted me as SRRT's coordinator.

In early June, I traveled to Quebec City and had both the honor and the pleasure of talking about SRRT with a wonderful group of dedicated and talented people. Jim Coats, of the University of California at Davis, organized the meeting. Jim had learned of SRRT at the memorial service of Noel Peattie, long time SRRT member and friend of Jim's. Members of ACE regularly face situations that challenge their commitment to the public good, in that the institutions for which they are employed are often closely tied to agri-business and other corporate concerns. Conflicts of interest sometimes arise, and these communication workers can find themselves in positions that compromise their ethical values.

I happened to have a handful of hot pink SRRT ribbons at home, which I took to Quebec and gave to the ACE members who happily attached them to their badges and wore them for the duration of the conference. I later learned that the ribbons generated many conversations. We all promised to keep in touch.

So, dear colleagues, the spirit of SRRT is spreading across the land. Be sure to aSRRT yourself today to ensure that the ripples of social responsibility continue their concentric journeys out into the world.

All my best,

Elaine

Coordinator, SRRT-AC



The Ethnic Press, Libraries, and Community: How We Can Strengthen the Ties

At the ALA Annual meeting in New Orleans AIP hosted a panel for the Alternatives in Publication Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table entitled “The Ethnic Press, Libraries, and Community: How We Can Strengthen the Ties.”

Nancy Kranich, former ALA President, tireless champion of intellectual freedom and foe of media consolidation, set the stage. If librarians want to promote access and intellectual freedom, the foundations of our profession, how can they do it if they are not offering access to multiple voices? As Nancy noted: **“Libraries must recognize their roles as leading providers of access to a broad spectrum of ideas generally unavailable from the mass media. Otherwise, they will abrogate their responsibility to guarantee free expression and promote the public interest in the digital age.”**

Voices that Must Be Heard

Next came Juana Ponce de Leon, Director, Grass Roots Media Project, and editor of *Voices that Must Be Heard*, a publication of the Independent Publishers Association’s New York office (IPA-NY). “Voices culls articles from the ethnic and community press, translates them into English when necessary, and emails this digest out on a weekly basis to readers who include government agencies, elected officials, foundations, grassroots organizations, academia and , of course, concerned and interested individuals. Members of the ethnic and community press also read *Voices*, where they pick up stories from each other ... an interesting cross-community pollination.”

A whopping forty per cent of NYC residents are immigrants, served by 300 weeklies and 26 dailies with readership of 3-4 million. Exit polls in NYC show that increases in voter participation has been largely due to civic engagement on the part of first-time immigrant voters. These new voters depend on the ethnic and community press for information and guidance.

Black Power

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (Black Press of America) is a 65-year-old federation of more than 200 Black community newspapers from across the United States. George Curry, editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service and BlackPressUSA.com, underscored the power of the black press as a unique and trusted voice for the communities they serve. There are over 200 African American newspapers who clearly distinguish themselves from the “white-owned” press. With 180 years of perspective to draw from, black newspapers serve a key role as “interpreters of the news.” A majority of black readers don’t view the holy trinity of the Washington Post, New York Times, and Wall Street Journal as credible. Not surprisingly, they trust “their” media more. Never at the forefront in the mainstream press, the African American perspective is increasingly being left out as media consolidation trends continue. (Looking at it from a purely business perspective, with 15 million readers and \$761 billion in buying power, the mainstream press is shooting itself in the foot by not representing the African American perspective more fully.) George noted: “It is foolish to ignore people of color, a segment of the population that will soon no longer be a ‘minority’. If you continue to only tell the stories of white people, you will die out...you not only have to think outside of the box, you have to throw the box away.” And though he was referring to newspaper publishers, perhaps one could say the same about libraries.

The Louisiana Weekly and Libraries: ‘Like Ham and Cheese’

Renette DeJoie Hall is Executive Editor of *The Louisiana Weekly*, <http://www.louisianaweekly.com> a newspaper started 80 years ago in New Orleans by her father, C.C. DeJoie. “My grandfather started this paper because he saw that our voices were not being heard,” said Renette. *The Louisiana Weekly* has had a long-standing relationship with libraries, and donated archival copies to the Amistad Research Center. *The Louisiana Weekly* is an important source for doctoral researchers who want to get an authentic account of the African Diaspora. The ethnic press is “recording the history of how we got here... the general media doesn’t dig deep enough....It is our responsibility to tell our story. We have to blend into the fabric of American life but we don’t have to give up our uniqueness.” The newspaper has been particularly hit hard by Hurricane Katrina. Renette, an accomplished journalist with her own award-winning career when her family asked her to come back and build the paper’s advertising revenue, was later handed the job of Executive Editor. Then came Katrina. Ms. Hall has foregone a salary since the day the hurricane hit. She lost her house and is still commuting from Houston, trying to get the paper back up and running at a pre-Katrina level. A great many subscribers have been scattered far beyond Louisiana. “We have a natural partnership with librarians, because we both share a passion for our cause,” said Renette. “We go together like ham and cheese.”

Information Literacy Instruction Exercise: Same Story, Different Points of View

We have all seen extensive coverage of the Abramoff lobbying scandal. But how many of us have read an account from the point of view of the Native American tribes? The accounts I read barely mentioned the tribes. What is their view? Or the scandal swirling around Rep. William Jefferson (D-La), and the \$90,000 found in his office when the FBI broke in to search it? If you were looking for Mr. Jefferson's point of view in the mainstream press, you would have missed it. His *exclusive* interview was given to the NNPA News Service, George Curry's organization. At this point one of our attendees (Amanda Hornby, a Media & Technology Studies Librarian at the University of Washington, Bothell) suggested that when we conduct the standard Information Literacy exercise, we require students to choose a big story (such as the current immigration debate) and look critically at how it is portrayed in the mainstream press and compare it with its treatment in the ethnic press. Amanda and I are both going to try out this approach when we return to our instruction duties this fall.

Multicultural Review

Lyn Miller-Lachman, editor of the *MultiCultural Review* (MCR).

Some of the issues raised included:

Not automated, centralized system is available from which to order independent titles.

Some libraries balk at the extra time (read: cost) it takes to process these materials.

Independent publishers need to be paid right away as they run lean operations and cannot afford to wait for payments.

AFTERWARD:

With such a lineup and a (presumably) vital topic, why was the turnout so low? We had three Round Tables sponsoring this event: IFRT EMIERT, and ourselves. I know that they promoted the event on their lists, as I did. Certainly, the combination of a remote location in the enormous convention center had something to do with it, as did, I'm sure, confusion in the ALA program caused by two programs at the same time with similar titles. Perhaps the Sunday afternoon time slot also contributed. Perhaps we need to address the scheduling of too many events. Are we fragmenting ourselves too much, not only as a Round Table, but as an association? This is a topic we might consider addressing further in the future.

- Carol Gulyas, *Alternatives in Publications Task Force*

Information and Public Interest

At the All Task Force meeting of SRRT at ALA, three members of IPPI met with members of AIP (Alternatives In Publication Task Force) in a combined meeting, where we talked about challenges both TFs are facing. We discussed IPPI's lack of activity now that Sam Trosow is not involved (fully occupied in his work on the Canadian scene) and remaining members for the most part lack his level of expertise and commitment to information policy issues. We decided that we want to propose combining the two task forces into one, with a new name, and the following goals:

Proposed Name:

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA TASK FORCE

Proposed Focus:

Promotes alternatives in publishing and the acquisition of alternative publishers' materials in libraries.

Challenges media consolidation.

Promotes critical analysis of communication policies and practices.

The two task forces already overlap in terms of the issues that we are working on, and both could use the potential synergy and cross-fertilization as a boost to our activities. At the SRRT Action Council meeting the representatives from IPPI and AIP raised the idea as a point of information, with the intent of bringing it back at Midwinter as a formal proposal.

- Rory Litwin, *Coordinator Information Policy in the Public Interest*

International Responsibilities Task Force Report at the 2006 Annual Conference in New Orleans

Our annual meeting in New Orleans began with the introduction of resolutions on Iran and Darfur. The **Resolution on the Connection Between a "Preventative War" on Iran and Libraries** was sent to the SRRT Action Council where it passed as a SRRT level resolution. However, the group recommended that the **Resolution on the Darfur Genocide** be introduced at the ALA Membership level. A possible collaboration with BCALA in getting the resolution passed was suggested, however the collaboration fell through. After the resolution was approved at SRRT Action Council, it was sent to ALA membership where it was eventually adopted by the ALA Council. IRTF will also publish a bibliography on Darfur resources that will be available through the IRTF web page.

Our annual program, *All the News You Never Get: Breaking the International News Blockade*, featuring award winning journalist Kristina Borjesson was an overwhelming success. The program, which focused on the lack of international news coverage in the mainstream media, was attended by an audience of well over 80 people. The program was also highlighted in ALA Cognotes. Other activities from IRTF included organizing and executing protests against both Madeleine Albright and Laura Bush along with other member of SRRT. Although attempts were made to disrupt our protests of Laura Bush (including the threat of arrest of an IRTF member), free speech prevailed and we were able to pass out fliers that expressed our dissatisfaction with both keynote speakers as a result of their representative domestic and foreign policies, which often directly contradict ALA's policies.

The task force also discussed the need for a fundraiser if we wish to continue presenting quality programs that highlight the mission of the IRTF. It was suggested that we consider selling note cards featuring photos of libraries from around the world.

Our last item of business focused on ideas for next year's program. One tentative idea deals aims at how and why certain nations receive favorable status from the U.S. and others don't. We will continue to work towards finding a topic for next year's program in Washington, D.C.

- LaJuan Pringle, Coordinator, International Responsibilities Task Force

Banned Books

In the spring of 2006, the Miami-Dade school district recently banned a children's book, *Vamos a Cuba* because some individuals felt that the book didn't honestly represent Cuba, that pictures showing smiling Cuban children in reality didn't exist.



This site:

http://new.photos.yahoo.com/dana_lubow/album/576460762317609178#page1

contains photographs taken June 15th, 2006, at a regularly scheduled children's program at the José Martí National Library showing Cuban children enjoying themselves.

- Dana Lubow

Access: I Didn't Go to Library School to Check Out Books

After graduation from library school, like many folks still in search of their first professional position, I found myself limiting my job search to reference and instruction positions. It was where the romance is, or so I had been led to believe. I hadn't mortgaged my family's future in order to check out books. Helping people learn how to find the information they needed seemed to be a terrific calling. As it would happen however, when an Access Services position in the neighborhood opened up I decided to look a little closer. Lucky for me this position had advertised that a solid knowledge of copyright issues, a personal research interest of mine even before library school, was a prerequisite. So even though the position would be located within the Access Services Department, with limited references and instruction opportunities, I decided to throw my hat in the ring. My interest in copyright law and public access trumped my romantic notions of librarian as researcher/bibliographer.

I came to the Access Services Department wide-eyed with the excitement and enthusiasm reserved for a new graduate. I was looking forward to an opportunity that would allow for the everyday application of my growing knowledge of copyright law and its implications on the library community. As the unit head for Course Reserves I have been given the chance to shape institutional copyright policy and involve myself in the national discussion of copyright and issues of educational fair use. I am motivated daily by the challenge of combating on a local level the increasing control that content owners have been allowed in regards to the multiple uses of legally acquired materials. I also relish the chance I have been given to participate in the discussion over the discouraging role that the U.S. Congress has played in securing these controls for content owners through copyright reform in the digital arena.

While the discussion of the copyright implications on intellectual freedom could be an article in itself, I will leave that for other days. Rather, I would like to step back just a little and discuss how it is not just by protecting fair use, respecting copyright by paying appropriate permissions, and developing coherent policy that makes my job fulfilling. The real fulfillment for me as a progressive librarian, and the underlying reason why I went into librarianship in the first place, is the chance to provide our users with permanent access to the materials they need. This is accomplished by librarians daily through a variety of avenues: creation of metadata; collection development; circulation of local materials, utilizing integrated library systems (universal borrowing); interlibrary loan; navigation of digital resources; ad infinitum.

While I am in an academic library environment, we are a public institution, and our charge as I understand it, is to provide access to all the materials necessary for our users in their educational, research and personal fulfillment needs. Libraries in general spend an enormous amount of capital securing materials for use by their population/user group. It is our job as librarians to provide access to those materials. Working hand in hand with the circulation staff has enabled me to give a personal face to the library user, assist in securing that our materials remain available, and provide alternatives for when they are not there.

There is much that we as a community can take from our colleagues involved in government documents. With the alarming trend of the federal government to discontinue print resources the gov doc librarians have been at the forefront with an impressive commitment to assuring our guaranteed continued access to the public record. While this is a very specific example, the implications for librarianship in particular are far-reaching. I think we might all agree that the continued access to our physical materials through traditional library services and preservation efforts will remain critical. The move to a digital information society however, requires us, regardless of library type or size, to keep abreast with new technology in order to become more creative with how we store digitally created materials and continue to ensure our users have permanent access. Access remains fundamental to library service regardless of whether our materials continue to be physical objects or are someday replaced by files on a server.

- Jeff Ridinger, Access Services Librarian, Illinois State University

New Orleans Experience: ALA New Orleans and the Military Police.

I'm from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I was born and raised there; but my family, as is common in Baton Rouge, is from other parts of the country. I moved to Florida only nine days before Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana. After seeing the coverage of so much devastation, and hearing from back home about the violence after the storm seemed to be spilling over even into Baton Rouge, I doubted the sanity of holding ALA in New Orleans so soon. Upon my return, however, I saw that downtown New Orleans was definitely open for business. What I wasn't expecting was my experience on Monday night on June 26th when I watched a confrontation between a New Orleans local and the Military Police nearly escalate into violence.

Like most of my esteemed colleagues at ALA, once my meetings ended and the conference areas closed up for the night I sampled the various nightlife and entertainment that New Orleans has to offer. That evening my path across Canal Street at St. Charles brought me directly towards a disturbance. A Military Police team, a man and a woman, were confronting a lone man, by the looks of him a New Orleans native in his mid-fifties. The two soldiers wore standard issue camouflage battle fatigues with black armbands emblazoned with "MP" identifying them as Military Police. Nearby their Humvee sat idling on St. Charles.

Two things immediately came to mind: Why were the MPs harassing this older gentleman when he was merely standing on a street corner? Why were they operating in the middle of the city? Especially right there on Canal Street. Everything I had heard from locals and the news to this point had indicated the National Guard had arrived primarily to quell crime in the outskirts of the city where the most violent crimes seemed to be more common. Apparently the impressions I had received from the news were wrong.

The MPs were ordering the man to come with them, and to leave the street corner. He refused and insisted he was waiting for his bus. Obviously he was somewhat drunk, or perhaps mentally ill, but at this point I couldn't tell. I joined a small group of onlookers and asked them what was happening.

After talking for a few minutes our outrage grew as one MP seized the man's arm. The man kept repeating that he was simply waiting for his bus. As I, and two New Orleans natives watched, we all noticed the female MP draw her nightstick and tuck it behind her back leg. My years of martial arts training, and her body language, virtually screamed her intention to strike this man at any second. At this point, I believed she was going to strike him whether he complied or not, and the others watching with me agreed.

A large African-American woman, a younger man, and I quickly decided to step in and stop what we saw to be imminent violence. We moved forward together. The African-American woman assumed the leadership role, and she began shouting at the two MPs like a mother scolding unruly children. Her shouts of, "Leave that man alone, he ain't done nothing", and "We'll take care of him" led our momentum towards the MPs.

Maybe it was the moment and the adrenalin, but I actually wasn't shocked until later that the MPs actually backed away. We gently took the man by both arms and guided him away while inquiring where he needed to go. Our small victory enlivened the young man to shout at the MPs and express his dislike of all the current politics. (Well, he was much more colorful than that, actually.)

All my life I've seen and heard about the good and bad side of New Orleans; it has always been something of an enigma. The politics and the people of Louisiana are always at their best and their worst there. Corruption and capitalism meets compassion and creativity. The aromas of culinary delights (great!) and the "aromas" of Bourbon Street during Mardi Gras (not great!) fill the city with a mixture of the amazing and the shocking.

So why am I sharing this experience? Put simply, there were a lot of reasons to step forward and risk my safety that night. Morals, ethics, justice, foolishness, and the list could go on and on. One thought occurred a split second right before I began walking forward, "Librarian at New Orleans conference beaten to a pulp for standing up against violence, news at 11:00". Was I out of my mind? It didn't matter though, because we aren't at war with ourselves, and people with a few too many drinks are not the same as looters. Nor should they be treated that way. At least, I don't want to believe that. This is not an attack on the military. They are doing the jobs they volunteered to do, and sometimes the jobs that they are not trained to do. If the two soldiers had been New Orleans Police Officers we as onlookers never would have felt the same outrage. This account showcases the difference between military and civilian enforcement and safety. However, the key point demonstrates that we as citizens, librarians, and humans can and do make a difference. We can and should stand up for what we believe in even when we don't know the consequences.

- Ted Chaffin, Assistant Access Services Librarian, Florida State University

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Multi-Cultural Idea Exchange

At the 7th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Multi-Cultural Idea Exchange, Co-Author(with Jessica Alexander)Diane Z. Shore of THIS IS THE DREAM was a special panel guest. The event was held on Saturday, June 24 at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel. The other distinguished panelists were: Dr. Phyllis D. Fisher, Coordinator, Online Services (Retired), New York City School Library System, New York, NY and LaJuan Pringle, Reference Librarian, University City Regional Library, Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, NC. In representing their respective areas of library service, each panelist highlighted activities that took place during the 2006 King Holiday Observance to “Keep the Dream Alive.”

Co-author Diane Z. Shore discussed THIS IS THE DREAM, a 2006 publication, which was poignantly illustrated by James Ransome and published by Armistad/HarperCollinsPublishers. The audience related to her account of: how she “felt driven” to write the book, collaboration with her co-author, gratitude to the celebrated illustrator and influential publishers, along with experiences from her travels. With regard to her travels, she spoke of having witnessed how the book’s rhythmic verse reveals the story of the civil rights struggle to children to make it an excellent resource for discussing Dr. King’s dream of “freedom and justice for all” as noted in its BOOKLIST starred review.

Dr. Phyllis D. Fisher’ presentation featured the 21st Annual National Celebration of the Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. of the Central Brooklyn(NY) Martin Luther King Commission and Congressman Major R. Owens at Prospect Heights High School. Dr. Fisher presented the history of the MLK Commission with Congressman Major Owens as its founder, its purpose: “to perpetuate the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to acknowledge his basic principles..., to inform local communities concerning the significance of Dr. King’s movement to secure human and civil rights ..., to make education the number one priority of community leaders and to improve the schools of Brooklyn.” At length, Fisher spotlighted the 2006 “Living the Dream” essay, poetry, and art contest for students in grades 4-12. During this year’s celebration, more than 30 winning students received cash awards of \$ 100 or more, certificates, and books while all participants received “I Am on the Dr. King’s Team” T-shirts. The presentation emphasized the various ways that school library media centers play a vital role in helping students, teachers, and the entire community with instruction, research, and materials in the production of contest entries and beyond to continue Dr. King’s philosophy of education as well as non-violence and peace.

Final Panelist LaJuan Pringle conveyed the essence of the King Holiday Observance in the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County through “a myriad of programs, displays, and bibliographies that serve to keep the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. alive.” Rich details were provided for the program “Listen As We Tell the Stories” held at the Beatties Ford Road Branch in a historically African American neighborhood in Charlotte. The event tied elements of Dr. King’s life using story, song, and dance featuring a guest storyteller/youth specialist along with audience interaction. Also, Pringle described “Freedom Rings Because of Dr. King,” a family- oriented, multicultural program at the West Boulevard Branch in a diverse area of Charlotte. The activities included a guest storyteller, screening of the film MARTIN LUTHER KING: A MAN OF PEACE, displays, bibliographies, quizzes, and puzzles.

For the Audience Idea Exchange, the moderator was Roy Joynes, Branch Manager, Oxon Hill Library, Prince George's County Memorial Library System, Oxon Hill, MD. While everyone in the audience received deserved applause as they accentuated the high marks of the Holiday library activities, none was more pronounced than those extolled Cleveland Public Library Director, Andrew A. Venable, Jr. Director Venable gave brief remarks about such events as: the Sunday Free Program featuring the acclaimed stage and television star, Melba Moore; the Annual Commemorative Program that featured renowned Cleveland author and News Columnist Sam Fullwood III, and the Library Holiday Staff Chorus, an Art Show along with events at all branches.

At the closing Materials Exchange, handouts available from each of the panelists were eagerly clutched as well as the calendars, posters, brochures, and programs from the Cleveland Public Library. In addition, contributions were available from the Westchester Library System's Eighth Annual African-American Writers & Readers Literary Tea - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 16, 2006. Moreover, materials from earlier events at St. Louis County Library (Missouri), The Weinberg Memorial Library, The University of Scranton (Pennsylvania), Florida Memorial College (Miami, FL), and Gaston County Schools (North Carolina). In addition, these handouts were distributed at the 9th Annual Diversity Fair in which the Martin Luther King Holiday Task Force has participated each year.

Special acknowledgments and appreciation for the success of this year's program are extended to Mary Biblo, Elizabeth Wilkins, Harriet Ying and all members of the Task Force, Elaine Harger, SRRT Coordinator, Satia Orange, Director and the OLOS Staff and all others assisting.

- Virginia B. Moore, Chair, ALA-SRRT Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force



*Historic Alki Point Lighthouse
West Seattle*

Clark, Sheila and Erica MacCreaigh. *Library services to the Incarcerated: Applying the Public Library Model in Correctional Facility Libraries*, Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

Some of us work in correctional facilities. Some of us plan this ahead of time, while just as many fall into the work despite thinking in library school we were going to do other things. The places we find ourselves once inside are all over the map: maximum security, medium security, jail outreach programs, deposit arrangements, well-stocked and funded library rooms, book cart patrol, or the kinds of prison libraries these two authors refer to, frighteningly, as broom closets. There is something for all of us in this great new work by Sheila Clark and Erica MacCreaigh, Jail Librarian and Outreach Services Manager at the Arapahoe Library District in Englewood, Colorado. The book is also sure to be valued by library school students with any curiosity about serving incarcerated people. It's the best thing to come along on this topic since Brenda Vogel's wonderful but out-of-date *Down for the Count: A Prison Library Handbook*, published in 1995.

The book covers much of what you need to know before starting a job inside a jail or prison. The emphasis is on practical advice, with illustrating sidebar anecdotes from other prison librarians working across the country. It assumes the reader already understands the need for books on the inside though they may need help explaining that need to prison deputies and wardens, or even their own public library colleagues. They do remind us that the main reason we provide books and libraries in facilities is to bring "a measure of civilized normalcy and familiarity to an otherwise regimented and often frightening environment that segregates its inhabitants from the rest of the world." (p.5) The socializing power of books in the de-socializing, dehumanizing environment of prison is at least as important as the other two, more often mentioned purposes of prison reading: education (sometimes still referred to as rehabilitation) and escapism.

All three reasons to read are given equal time in the Collection Development chapter, which is fiercely anti-elitist: buy, they say, according to "the most expressed community interest." (p.149) Go watch what people reach for in the book section of the supermarket, and keep up with new urban novels via the Listmania lists on Amazon.com. They describe a period early in the Arapahoe Jail Library's service history when the head librarian was away for an internship and book ordering was left to an inexperienced paraprofessional. Not knowing what else to do, she responded to demand. "Every purchase made during those three months was specifically requested by at least one inmate. Our circulation statistics went through the roof." (p. 207) In a library with little shelf space, or consisting of book carts, you just can't get too esoteric unless, of course, enough prisoners ask you to. It's all about demand.

Chapters cover negotiating prison bureaucracy, how to make the library seem valuable to people who think it's a waste of resources and physical space, laying out the library room for safety and efficiency, and finding materials that might not be available from your public library system vendor. Of course they don't leave out everybody's favorite prison library topic: contraband! ("The spines and dust jacket flaps are primo places to hide razor blades ... NEVER sweep the pockets, spine or flap with your finger.") The chapter on program planning is very good: practical, cheap, interesting ideas, with tips for getting approval and bringing your presenter into the unfamiliar prison environment as comfortably as possible. Try not to interrupt your regular library service for programming, regardless of how unique it is and how much good PR it will generate. The top priority must always remain book service, because the demand for that in prison and jail will never cease to be enormous.

The chapters "Understanding Yourself" and "Understanding the Patrons" both center around protecting yourself at work. This means not making yourself vulnerable to manipulation by the patrons, or getting dragged into games and power struggles. It is important to set clear boundaries despite daily testing, both by patrons who need more from your services than you can accommodate, and by those who want non-library things from you which you cannot and should not provide. They give examples of prison staff cliques, hierarchy, and power dynamics: rolling with these means keeping your job and knowing how much leeway you might have. Yes, building a valuable service in an atmosphere of mistrust, surveillance and watching your ass is a seriously depressing prospect for somebody who went into prison work out of a sense of solidarity with the incarcerated. But I admit I've taken to heart a few of the book's self-protection suggestions in my daily work already. Prison does make lots of people into users and abusers, no matter who they might have been before they got locked up. The authors refer to the public library model, which affirms access, intellectual freedom, and privacy in an environment where these are hard to come by. A recurrent theme in the book is that prison librarianship means working hard to say "yes", public library-style, in the ultimate environment of "no". Say yes to book requests, interlibrary loan, program ideas, and collaborations. Really, though, a lot of the prison librarian's daily work is going to consist of "no" despite the best planning and service

ethic you can muster. Trying to distribute materials fairly, resisting pressure, deflecting come-ons, handling short resources and strict adherence to facility rules means saying lots of “no”, even more than in a public library environment, where there is already enough “no”. Top priority in handling all of these twists and turns, the authors say, is consistency, because in prison anything resembling special treatment lands you in hot water fast. They provide plenty of methods and examples of how to say no and enforce the rules in difficult situations. The most important thing at the end of the day is preserving permission to keep the service going (and with it, your job) from the big “NO” from the prison administration.

I was happy to see a strong focus on jail outreach, as it’s what I do, and so very little covers jail in the library literature generally. Jail means high turnover: 80% of new jail admissions are released within five days (p.90). Building up a pool of regulars for your services or bringing in requests and reserves for patrons can be difficult. Jails also have high security regardless of one’s charge, and less privacy, more crowding, and more erratic scheduling than prisons do. Where I provide book cart services, on Rikers’ Island in New York City, prisoners are both released and transferred often, and as an outside service provider I don’t have a method of tracking people to housing areas, jails and prisons I don’t serve. This means my book loss rate is high (though I imagine there are many free-world branches with a loss rate the same or higher) and the relationship with many of my patrons rather brief. With the input of staff I can identify the areas in each jail with lower turnover, which often house the patrons who value library service the most anyway because they are isolated, not getting bailed out, or marginalized in some way. Less than 20% of U.S. jails are able to make use of library services provided by the local public library. (p.7) And because outreach service in general doesn’t always attempt to cover all the patrons in a given facility, we can assume the number of people in the country’s jails receiving these services is significantly under twenty percent.

Clark and MacCreaigh’s final chapter takes the reader through the development of outreach service in the Arapahoe County jail, step by step. An early paperback deposit collection maintained since the mid 1970s by the county public library’s extension department was expanded in 1984 to include hardcovers and magazines. After years of this approach a progressive facility captain came forward offering permission and money for the library system to open a real library inside the jail. The county system had to be ready to act: accepting the offer, negotiating a new written arrangement with the facility and hiring a librarian. The service has expanded and shrunk since then according to the jail’s priorities. What will strike the reader the most in Arapahoe’s story is how dependent the library staff are on the judgment and philosophy of the changing facility administrators, none of whom, of course, are librarians.

Radical librarians or anyone looking at prison/jail administrators with a built-in skepticism might see this kind of dependence as unacceptably unstable and compromising. You’re providing a needed service, plus you’re helping the facility maintain quiet housing areas and offering good PR often for free but the administration and individual guards still can put stones in your pathway, which you have to tactfully negotiate around (or just accept and start over.) What kind of a foundation for a library is this? You advocate, write grant applications, develop collections, and provide them to patrons, in an environment that ignores, demeans and refuses you, and where permission to do your job can be revoked tomorrow. None of us would accept conditions like these anywhere else in our professional lives. Plus, those of us who look at prisoner support as a political struggle will go crazy trying to reshape our struggle until it fits under the permission of the jail admin. Is the value of the work we’re doing really worth our settling for these messy arrangements? Might our outreach cooperation actually be letting the prisons off the hook?

I think it’s important for those of us who care about prisoner reading to recognize is that this struggle should have two fronts. There should be some of us in the facilities providing direct service and playing by the rules, but also librarians and prisoner support groups organizing on the outside, putting pressure on the state to improve access to books for prisoners on a larger scale, improving the contracts and stability of library services in facilities, and recognizing access to literacy and reading materials as an entitlement, not a privilege, in correctional facilities. If we cannot provide services without the state’s permission, let’s hold the state accountable for a service that meets needs and covers entire facilities. This means political activism. There are roles for many of us to play without even setting foot in a correctional facility.

Clark and MacCreaigh have created an easy to use guide sure to be referred to and recommended by prison librarians and outreach departments for years to come. If you’re at all curious about working on the inside, I urge you to pick it up.

Jessica Ross is a jail outreach librarian in New York City.

Knecht, G. Bruce. *Hooked: Pirates, Poaching, and the Perfect Fish*, Rodale, 2006.

In the tradition of *Fast Food Nation*, Knecht tells the tale of the chase and capture of the pirate ship *Viarsa* by the Australian patrol boat *Southern Supporter* through the stories of those on board both vessels and through the narratives of those affected around the world (mostly financially) by the incident. This approach personalizes the issues surrounding the pirating of fish supplies around the world and lends a novel-like air to the story which often reads like a high-seas adventure ala Patrick O'Brian.

Lee Lantz discovered a Patagonian toothfish in the haul of a fishing boat in Valparaiso, Chile. It was 1977 and Lantz was looking for a new fish to sell. Told by the fisherman that the fish (called cod of the deep by locals) was too oily to consume, Lantz chose to experiment with it anyway. Americans, he knew, actually preferred fatty varieties and, more importantly, the meat of the fish was white, another peculiar American preference. Because it had so many similarities to sea bass, Lantz chose the name Chilean sea bass for his discovery. When one of his buyers began ordering tons of it to replace the expensive halibut in their popular product, Fish Fingers, a new high-stakes business was born. Eventually, Chilean sea bass also became a staple on the menus of trendy restaurants across the nation.

Of course, with the high demand came short supplies in legal waters. Enter the modern-day fishing pirates such as the crew of the *Viarsa* who are suspected of pirating and are chased relentlessly by Australian authorities through dangerous, iceberg-ridden waters. With help from other nations such as South Africa, the boat is seized and the crew tried in Australia. (Typically, the owner of the vessel is safe at home in Spain.)

If I were working with young people to bolster their environmental awareness, I would be tempted to use this engaging book as a catalyst for discussions, not just about the environment, but about the very character of human nature. During a fascinating conversation about the plight of all marine life, Daniel Pauly, fish scientist and critic of overfishing, reminds Knecht that Angola “was exporting massive quantities of fish even when it was in the midst of a major famine.” (180) The statement led me to marvel at our lack of regard for other species, each other, and the environment in general? Knecht, in discussing the previous overfishing of whales, states: “It was obvious that the systematic killing would eventually eliminate whale populations as well as the human industries that depended on them—but the whalers...responded to the scarcity they created by redoubling their efforts.” (202) This statement led me to wonder why are humans so short-sighted about the negative repercussions of their actions to their own lives and livelihoods?

From fish merchant to celebrity chef, those involved in the creation of the clamor for the Patagonian toothfish are loathe to give up before the last available bite of the fish has been eaten.

- Jane Ingold, Penn State Erie, SRRT Book Review Editor



Bob Ostertag. *People's Movements, People's Press: The Journalism of Social Justice Movements*, Beacon Press: Boston, 2006.

"There is no more powerful an argument for the importance of a movement press than this: the movement press allows the actual makers of history tell their own story" (159).

This sentence encompasses the purpose of Bob Ostertag's *People's Movements People's Press*. Ostertag's goal is to outline the idea that to truly understand the journalism of social movement one must understand the "particular movements of which each journalist was a part" (1). Even small and seemingly insignificant social movement presses were actually very influential in creating an understanding of the movements' issues and guiding the various movements' development.

While not an exhaustive history, Ostertag picks five different social movements from 1830 to the present for his focus. Beginning with the abolitionist press, he moves on to discuss the suffragist literature, the gay and lesbian press, the Vietnam War protesting GI press, and the environmental press. For most of the sections, Ostertag follows each of the movements from the creation of their initial presses until the movement's purpose has been resolved.

Some of the movements chosen for this piece have a clearer timeline structure for coverage than others. While the abolitionist, suffragist, and the GI presses were all initiated with the growing realization of a need for change, and grew and climaxed sometime just before the movement issue was resolved – slavery ended, women could vote, the Vietnam War ended – two other movements included are not so defined.

The gay and environmental presses do not have one major defining issue that once hurdled, would lead to a precise shift in literature and strategy. The gay press section covers the time period from the early twentieth century to the present. The environmental movement section begins in the late nineteenth century with John Muir's founding of the Sierra Club and also ends in the present.

Ostertag profiles a number of activists and the presses they ran including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony with their *Revolution*, Dave Foreman with *Earth First!*, and the Daughters of Bilitis with *The Ladder*.

With an entertaining writing style, Ostertag easily weaves together a complex narrative of social movements, those who are the leaders of and the writers for (often the same people) those movements, and the numerous journals and magazines that were focused on those movements. He keeps the reader from getting bogged down in too much detail.

While *People's Movements People's Press* is very effective in demonstrating the effect of the five social movement presses on their respective movements, it is missing a concluding chapter. A 'big picture' section detailing Ostertag's ideas beyond the five individual movements would have broadened the conversation to the overall status of the relationship between social movements and their presses. As it stands *People's Movements People's Press* feel like five similar, yet separate histories.

- Heather Hill



IFLA and SCECSAL Report to SRRT September 29, 2006

Diverging from my usual report, this time I am reporting on two meetings held in the summer of 2006. This report includes my usual comments on the conference of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and also on the SCECSAL meeting, the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central & Southern Africa Library & Information Associations. SCECSAL is held every two years and is the largest meeting of librarians on the African continent.

The World Library and Information Congress, 72nd IFLA General Conference and Council, was held in Seoul, South Korea, August 20-24, although meetings were held both before and after the official dates. The Koreans claim that they have the most Internet penetration of any country and my experience validates the claim. I even had a computer with broadband Internet access included in the cost of my hotel room. Seoul is a large but manageable city, lively at all hours, with a great subway system (even for foreigners). It is also one of the safer places one might go. The conference was well-organized and included the usual lavish receptions and cultural events. The main cultural evening was quite phenomenal with performances of the best musical and dance groups in the country. The drumming was indeed magnificent.

The guest of honor and keynote speaker was former political prisoner, Nobel Prize laureate, and former President of the country, Dae-jung Kim. He is usually known in the US as Kim Dae-jung. The wife of the President also made an appearance.

The political drama around the IFLA Council once again centered around Cuba. Robert Kent prevailed upon the Latvian and Lithuanian Librarians' Associations to introduce another resolution well before the meeting in support of the so-called "independent librarians," who are neither independent nor librarians. Interesting, the Lithuanians withdrew their support before we got to Seoul, presumably after learning that they were being used in the service of US foreign policy. That left the resolution without a second and so it did not come up for a vote. I have heard that the Latvians were committed to follow through because of a vote at their own conference but that they were also relieved when the item was taken off the agenda. Not even "New Europe" is going along with this charade anymore. Let me give special thanks to Ann Sparanese who's recent paper was very well received and helped explain things to a number of our colleagues. ("Fact and Fiction about the 'Independents' of Cuba: ONCE AGAIN"). There were no other substantive resolutions.

IFLA has now adopted a three pillars model: Membership, The Profession, and Society. I think we can be proud of the work of several of our members working with an international group in motivating the Society Pillar. My own involvement now is chiefly as a member of the Free Access to Information and Freedom Expression (FAIFE) Committee, an IFLA core program. FAIFE has increasingly embraced social responsibility issues as part of the Society Pillar. As Chair of the FAIFE Program Committee, I organized a panel on "Access to HIV/AIDS Information: A Life and Death Issue." It went quite well and we are organizing a similar panel as well as a performance and a film at next year's meeting in Durban, South Africa. FAIFE also sponsored a discussion around the issue of the Danish cartoons portraying Muhammad as a terrorist. Unfortunately, it just got going around the time that it was scheduled to finish, after only one hour.

SCECSAL XVII was hosted by the Tanzania Library Association and held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, July 10-14, 2006. The theme was "Librarianship as a Bridge to an Information and Knowledge Society in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa." The Standing Conference of National and University Libraries of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (SCANUL-ECS) met on July 9-10. There were also several pre-conference sessions, including: "Making Library and Information Associations Functional: Some Practical Experiences from the Eastern, Central and Southern African Countries;" "Workshop on Freedom of Information, Knowledge Management and Libraries;" "Workshop on Licensing and Negotiation Skills for the Digital Libraries;" "Electronic Resource Solution: Find Out How Millions of Researchers Are Doing Their Research More Efficiently;" and "SPRINGLINK Usage and Training Session for Librarians, Researchers and Students." Note that the last two were organized by vendors, Elsevier and Springer.

I was invited to give a paper at the small pre-conference workshop on library associations. This was an opportunity to talk to the key people who are motivated to try to revitalize the mostly very small and underfunded library associations in Africa. My remarks were basically an update of the article that I published in the 2005 *IFLA World Report* discussing what we do in SRRT and similar activities in IFLA. It was titled, "The Role of Library Associations in Civil Society." Amongst other resolutions, six were adopted under a social responsibilities framework asserting fundamental principles that SRRT and ALA as a whole

would be find quite familiar. We also agreed to try to link the rich country library associations with the struggling African associations for possible grant proposals. Keith Fiels was there representing ALA and he gave his enthusiastic support along with Winnie Vitzansky, the Director of the Danish Library Association.

The conference theme was operationalized to connect almost everything discussed to “knowledge management.” This resulted in some very academic and even boring presentations that seemed to have little to do with the critical day-to-day problems of librarianship in most of Africa. One must question such a theme focused on high tech and inward looking techniques when most Africans lack access to even basic library services. Obviously, this is especially true in the rural areas. Of course, there were also some high points including a panel on “Knowledge Management and Prevention of HIV/AIDS Pandemic.” One of the speakers at that panel even addressed “library colonialism.” The Conference passed resolutions on capacity building for knowledge management, the development of an interactive SCECSAL website to share knowledge, the creation of knowledge management partnerships, and strengthening library associations through strategic planning and better communications through the mass media and with policy makers.

The term “library colonialism” is particularly apt for describing the U.S. Department of State’s campaign to establish “American Corners” in libraries around the world and now in African libraries. I learned that one was established and opened by the American Ambassador at the State University of Zanzibar Library during the conference. Furthermore, the American Corner was initially offered to the Zanzibar Public Library, the Zanzibar Archives, and the Zanzibar Department of Education, all of which refused the offer. I also learned that the University administration, and not the head librarian, made the decision to take the American Corner.

Along with Shiraz Durrani (who some of you may know), I got a chance to visit this library and my assumptions were verified. The State University of Zanzibar is only about five years old and has quite a small library. In fact, there was no room for an American Corner so they had to find a separate space. So the “Corner” became an entirely new room in another building dedicated to US materials. Of course, the main attraction for the local students is the six computers with access to the Internet. The materials include multiple copies of books and videos on American government and culture. During my visit, the computers were being used but none of the materials. What I find most disturbing is that a library with only three professionals would have to dedicate one-third of its staff to a new space divorced from its primary focus, serving the curriculum needs of the students. Library colonialism is alive and well.

As usual, I would be happy to try to answer any questions.

*-Al Kagan, SRRT Councilor
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SRRTAC-L - The SRRT discussion group SRRTAC-L is open to all SRRT members and is a relatively low-traffic (less than five messages a day unless there is a hot topic brewing) way of keeping up with SRRT's issues and discussions in-between conferences. Help decide SRRT's future direction and join in some lively debates. If you would like to join the SRRT discussion group, send the following message in the body of the email, to listproc@ala.org: subscribe SRRTAC-L/[your first name] [your last name] To unsubscribe: unsubscribe SRRTAC-L

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